WEATHERING THE CONTENT MARKETING STORM

A Content Marketing Survival Guide for Public Relations Professionals

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As news and communications become more digital, mobile, and interconnected, there is more competition for audience attention than ever before.

The content storm is brewing, and it’s uprooting traditional methods of reaching your target audience. PR professionals secure in their role as content gatekeeper are beginning to see the signs. The wind is howling. The sirens are blaring. And the lights are starting to flicker.

As brands and consumers create more content than we could ever consume, traditional media is becoming less impactful.

The good news is, that as a PR professional, you have already developed many of the skills you will need to survive and thrive the storm of content for marketing.

70% of marketers are creating more content than they did a year ago.

-Content Marketing Institute
How so? You know how to amplify a message with influencer outreach. You know how to broadcast a consistent message across multiple platforms. And most importantly, you know how to tell a compelling story.

By combining your existing communication skills with a few new practices, you can adapt to thrive in the new content marketing era. Marketing, advertising, and PR can combine to deliver the right message to the right audience at the right time.

At TopRank Online Marketing, we have spent the last decade developing and refining techniques that work for the crowded marketplace of ideas that is modern media.

Pay attention: These ten strategies will help help guide you through your transformation from earned media droplets to a content marketing hurricane.

The Team at TopRank Online Marketing

13x is how many times more likely marketers that have prioritized blogging are to have a positive ROI.

- HubSpot
The safest place to be in a storm is inside a sturdy building with a strong foundation. With a tornado of information on the internet, lightweight content just blows away.

Use your expertise to create a solid content base by establishing your authority on the topics you know best. The best strategy for getting content seen and shared is to produce something substantial that adds real value to issues your audience cares about.

Make content findable by following SEO best practices and shareable with optimized social media sharing.

With a solid and specific content foundation, your brand will become “the best answer”, attracting customers as well as journalists and bloggers in search of your expertise.
Modern journalists are under intense pressure to deliver useful stories on popular and competitive topics. You can help their search by setting up a beacon to guide them: Create and optimize the kind of content they’re likely to be searching for.

Tools like BuzzSumo and Topsy provide up-to-the-minute reports on what’s trending across the internet. The trending topics that have staying power are a good starting point for crafting content that can lead a journalistic search party straight to you.

“Content is the currency for building the visibility that can boost earned media.”

- Lee Odden
PR professionals are great at telling stories that connect. And a great story is the foundation of successful content marketing. But in a survival situation, a good story isn’t enough: You need to tell your audience what to do with the information you give them.

With each piece of content you create, ask yourself what action you want your reader to take after they read it. It could be clicking a link, filling out a form, signing up for an email list—anything that deepens the relationship and moves the reader from prospect to customer.

Then make sure to measure how many people followed your call to action so you can adjust for future content marketing campaigns.
Venturing out into the storm alone is perilous. Most PR professionals have experience working with influencers to co-create content. Influencer marketing can be a key component of a successful content marketing program. Put your outreach skills to good use by aligning your content with people who can help create and promote it organically.

Influencer marketing can be as simple as co-creating content with industry experts for your mutual benefit. You can also work with allied influencers on:

- Partnering on events and more sophisticated content projects
- Creating opportunities for to advocate for your brand
In a content marketing twister, content creation resources are often the most valuable and scarcest. When competing for content and customer attention, nobody wins.

Corporate communications, PR and marketing are best served by working together on content that follows brand guidelines and that is accountable to both earned, owned and shared media goals.

By coordinating content for marketing and PR, companies can achieve more effective, actionable visibility on search engines, across social networks and in mentions on industry websites.

Coordinated content also delivers are more seamless and satisfying customer experience.
To help your content get found in the roaring gale of content marketing, you’ll need to boost your signal. Start by creating high-quality content that provides clear value for the reader. Optimize your content for SEO, then share it on social media and encourage your audience to like and share it.

Each social share tells search engines that your content is valuable and worth a high place in the rankings. An effective social strategy will include both paid and organic activities to drive engagement.

Be sure to include compelling visuals and concise yet creative copy to draw in your online community and encourage engagement.
When you desperately need to get your message heard, it’s tempting to keep your finger on the “Talk” button, to broadcast your content over and over again.

But PR professionals can no longer simply blast information at a list of journalists. It’s important to communicate directly with an audience and to start a dialog.

While the need to create a dialog is a challenge, it’s also a great opportunity. You can tap into the discussion around your brand in real-time, find out what people are saying and respond dynamically. Instead of controlling the conversation you can participate and help steer the discussion, creating a reputation for authenticity and transparency that will serve your brand in the future.
Some people weather an emergency by doing whatever it takes to survive, no matter how cynical or out-of-character they have to be. That strategy won’t work for the content marketing storm: The stories that are successfully shared and promoted on social networks need to be authentic, personal, and emotionally compelling.

Think of Dove’s “Real Woman” campaign or Always’ “#likeagirl” video. They tell an emotional, human story with almost no brand promotion. Yet these campaigns are inextricably linked to the brand.

Good storytelling builds your brand’s reputation for providing valuable content, which makes industry media more likely to cite your brand.
In the chaos and aftermath of the content marketing blast, the old rules of what works and what doesn’t no longer apply. As a PR professional, you have the messaging, planning, and promotion skills to succeed, but you need the ability to measure in order to start building a new set of guidelines. A good understanding of marketing analytics will enable you to see what content succeeded and what failed to connect.

Analytics can guide you through content trials and iterate to maximize the effectiveness of your content marketing efforts. To do that, always consider:

- Which headlines resonated best through views, clicks and shares?
- Which offers resulted in the most the desired actions?
- Which content topics engaged readers most and which made them click away?
PR professionals that invest in their content marketing capabilities can avoid the destruction that a content storm can bring.

The new role for PR professionals is to be creators and participants in the content ecosystem.

With the democratic platform that blogs, social media and other publishing resources provide, you can distribute your own content to reach audiences. When content is informative, insightful, and emotionally compelling, it will attract shares and engagement that will amplify it further.

By leveraging earned and owned media to become a trusted, valued source of information, PR can play one of the most important roles in digital marketing there is.

“If you want to be in the media, become the media.”

-Lee Odden
TopRank Marketing has developed a powerful set of digital marketing services to help you attract, engage and convert more customers to grow your business.

**Content Marketing**
Customer centric content plans that attract audiences, engage interested buyers and converts customers.

**Social Media Marketing**
Create trust and earn referrals to keep your brand top of mind by creating compelling and engaging social media messaging.

**Performance Optimization**
Make sense of the marketing data at your disposal, by synthesizing and analyzing data to optimize your digital marketing performance.

**SEO**
An optimized approach will make your company the best answer for potential customers actively looking for solutions.

**Influencer Marketing**
Reach your target audience by building relationships with influencers who already have industry authority and credibility.

**Search & Social Ads**
Use search, social and display ads to tap into highly targeted audience that is ready to make purchasing decisions.

TopRank Marketing Can Help

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Ready to get started? Contact TopRank Marketing to schedule your content marketing audit.

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